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ABSTRACT

This handbook contains strategies for facilitating a peer support group for vocational students in nontraditional programs. Outlined first are the goals and objectives of a support group, and the benefits of a peer support group are set forth. Following a description of the characteristics and role of the facilitator, strategies are provided for establishing group leadership roles and for determining the authority and decision-making power of group members. Attendance taking, scheduling, and time management are discussed. Included among those peer support group activities covered are structured meetings, guest speakers, and outreach activities. Program funding is mentioned briefly. Examined next are activities that feeder schools, parents, the community, the school itself, and support services can undertake to encourage enrollment of previously under-represented groups of students. (A related handbook on sex fairness and equal opportunity for vocational students in nontraditional programs and a handbook of laws guaranteeing equal education and employment opportunities are available separately--see note.) (MN)

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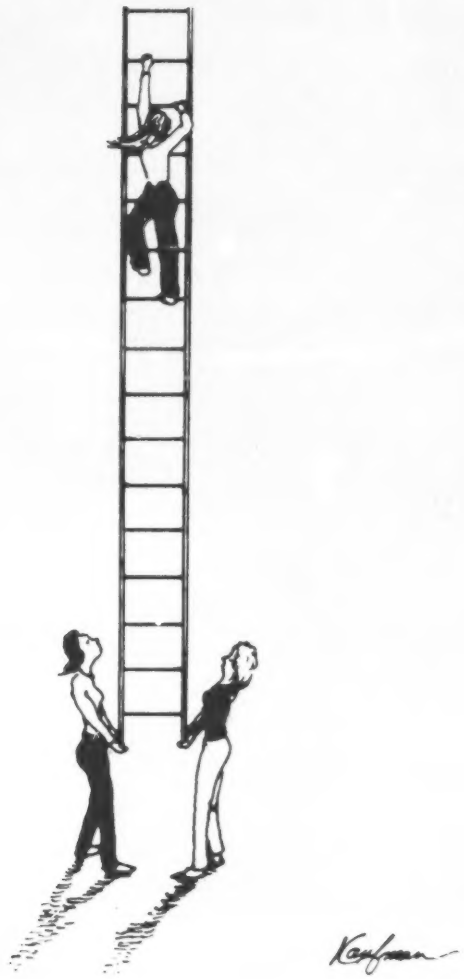
Together We Can

Strategies for the facilitation of a peer support group for vocational students in non-traditional programs.



Written by Joan Capriole with contributions by Susan Riley and Elizabeth Keroack

Edited by Elizabeth Keroack

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CREDITS

TOGETHER WE CAN

STRATEGIES FOR THE FACILITATION OF A PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS IN NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS.

Book #1 of a series by Project SCOPE (Support for Co-educational Occupational Programs in Education).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I consider it a unique opportunity and an incredible learning experience to have directed Project SCOPE, and I am both proud of and delighted by its wonderful success. I also felt it to be a great honor for Shawsheen to have hosted the grant, thus showing me their trust and support in supportive services for non-traditional students. Many people have donated their time and offered their talents for the project, and I am forever indebted to them for their hard work and guidance, particularly those which follow:

John McDermott, SCOPE coordinator, for his constant encouragement, ongoing patience and infinite wisdom; Joan Capriole, project facilitator and author, for holding my hand and patting me on the back when I needed it most; Elizabeth Keroack, editor and contributing author, for her terrific ideas and superior writing abilities; Jim Munn, our photographer, for his outstanding photographs and other numerous contributions; Mary Terrizzi, our illustrator, for her enchanting artistry; Kathy Murray, our secretary, for her endurance through all those retypings; the many support group students for allowing me to interview, photograph, quote, question, and do all this in a furious attempt to bring out their unique qualities and charming individuality; Maureen Lynch, a fine and special friend, for giving me "the spark"; the bureau of student services at the Massachusetts Department of Education for their cooperation and assistance; Beverly Lydiard, administrator at Minuteman Technical High School in Lexington, Massachusetts, for the many contributions she has given us for this booklet; Alfred Shiner for his very special photos (thanks!); Mr. James and his Graphic Arts Department at Shawsheen for turning my box full of unfinished layouts, pencilled-in notes, last-minute changes and other various uncoded illustrations and photographs, all into 4 beautiful books (nothing short of simple magic); and all the wonderful people at Shawsheen for their cooperation, trust, and ongoing support.

Lastly I want to thank Paul, Bob, Don, Charlie, Bill, Luigi, Matthew, Frank, David, John, Mike, Dwayne, Shawn, Dave, Domingo, Jim, Chip, Tom and particularly Susan and Brion. The special friendships I have found in these people, the numerous experiences we have shared, and the four years we've all spent together growing and learning have changed my life and how I see myself. Without them, the development of this project and my strong desire to write would be non-existent. And to all of them I dedicate, with much gratitude and love, the many hours of hard work I have placed into Project SCOPE.

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Writer's Note

This booklet and the three others in the Project Scope series are being written during a time of substantial change in the perception of men's and women's roles. No longer do young men and women have to choose what has been traditionally considered the "right" role for them because of their gender. Society is now beginning to allow individuals the freedom to choose what is "right" for themselves, regardless of the sex role stereotype which adheres to their chosen occupation.

Traditionally all-male and all-female educational programs are much less in evidence than in years past, and today, under the law, all programs are open to persons of both sexes. This is especially true in vocational education.

Historically, vocational education programs trained girls to work within the home or to work outside the home only briefly before marriage. Boys, on the other hand, were prepared to work in the outside world in "men only" types of jobs. Because the belief existed that there were exclusively "male" and "female" interests and aptitudes, the expectation followed that men and women should only pursue those educational courses which were appropriate to their particular sex.

Generally speaking, women must expect to work for pay outside the home for a much larger part of their lives than they have in the past. If they do not decide upon an occupation and obtain the training and education necessary for it, they are more likely than a male counterpart to be limited to low-paying jobs which may neither be interesting to them nor provide them with the chance for advancement.

As women move in larger numbers into the work force, men must expect to participate and share in the work of the home. Hopefully, progress toward a type of balance between the sexes will occur in these changing times. The key factor to bear in mind is that work done in the home and in the paid work force can be done well by persons of either sex who are prepared and trained to do that work.

It is hoped that the readers of these booklets--those young men and women whose futures lie before them, those who are actually exploring non-traditional opportunities, and those authority figures who influence occupational decision-making--will find insight and inspiration in the pages that follow, and thus encourage true freedom of educational pursuits.

Sincerely,

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Project Facilitator, Project SCOPE

Susan L Riley
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Project SCOPE

Support for Coeducational Occupational Programs in Education

WHAT An ESEA Title II P.L. 94-482 funded project administered through the Division of Occupational Education, Massachusetts Department of Education (Project No. 80-871-000-096-7).

WHY To produce a series of four booklets designed to provide information on the concept of peer support groups for vocational students in non-traditional programs.

PRODUCTS Four Booklets:

No. 1. *Together We Can*; strategies for the facilitation of a peer support group.

No. 2. *A Fair Shot/An Equal Chance;* a handbook of activities for a peer support group.

No. 3. *It's Not Funny/It's Illegal;* a summary of laws guaranteeing equal education and employment opportunities.

No. 4. *It's Up To You/Portraits;* character sketches of students in non-traditional vocational programs.

WHERE Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 100 Cook Street, Billerica, Massachusetts 01866

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Follow-up efforts are continuing.

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TOGETHER WE CAN:

Strategies for the facilitation of a peer support group for vocational students in non-traditional programs.

General Introduction

TOGETHER WE CAN provides guidelines for vocational administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and other interested readers who wish to facilitate the formation of a support group for students in non-traditional vocational programs. The booklet introduces the concept of a support group — its need, goals, objectives, organization, and procedures of operation.

The entire series of PROJECT SCOPE booklets intends to provide information concerning the concept and facilitation of a support group for students in non-traditional careers (Booklet 1); the formation and operation of such a support group (Booklet 2); a summary of those laws which guarantee individuals the right of career choice (Booklet 3); and a series of character sketches of students who are actually engaged in exploring non-traditional programs and are sustained in this endeavor by a support group (Booklet 4).* The above information is a necessary prerequisite to the development of a functional support group in any school context. Such supportive services will increasingly be needed now that equal opportunity has been mandated by law. In the future, there may also come an increasing awareness of an individual's need of a support system throughout the life process, one starting from his/her earliest grades of school and extending into midlife. Someday, perhaps, equal opportunity and support services will be available to all people desiring them.

* A more in-depth outline of the Project SCOPE books appears in Appendix No. 1.

Introduction to the Concept of a Support Group

Why A Support Group?

There are many valid reasons why it is both desirable and advantageous to set up *a* vocational achievement support group in a school which offers students participation in non-traditional career areas. Those students who consider non-traditional programs most always need help in choosing, entering, and remaining in those programs because of the sexual stereotyping associated with their choices and the subsequent pressures which result from that very stereotyping. A support group is a group in which students, through the training and assistance of a facilitator, learn to function as counselors who support and advise one another within a group setting. The support group must have personnel to assume certain roles necessary to its functioning: (1) *a facilitator* — an adult, usually a guidance counselor (but may be any other qualified member of the school staff), who is experienced in functioning as a group leader, and (2) *peer counselors** — the students who learn to work as a support system whereby they advise and assist one another. The main goal of the student support group is "to help equip students to deal with the personal, social, psychological, and physical challenges which often arise when a person learns and works in a non-traditional environment."**

The presence of a support group in a vocational school helps meet many of the needs of students who select non-traditional shops. For example, student members of the group assist each other in defining as clearly as possible not only what it is that they want to do, but also what they believe is important and worth doing in the world. The group itself provides the emotional and practical support necessary to the assumption and achievement of these goals.

Once students have helped each other ascertain where their interests and aptitudes lie, they then encourage one

* Additional information on peer counseling appears in Appendix No. 2.

** Beverly Lydiard, Title IX Coordinator, Minuteman Technical H.S., Lexington, Mass.

another in their choice of a non-traditional vocational program. Strong self-images result from group interaction and this leads to students' transference of contributions made in the group situation to other school endeavors and, ultimately, to the world of work.

Most importantly, the group experience helps students in non-traditional careers increase their coping mechanisms so that they may move beyond their problems toward success and satisfaction in their work. The wide base of support from the group counters the sometimes broad lack of support from other areas of the environment.

Goals and Objectives of a Support Group

The most important support group goal is a general, yet multi-faceted one: to help student members define, as clearly as possible, what they want to do with their lives professionally, what they believe is worth accomplishing in the world of work, and what they consider to be the essential emotional and career support services necessary in order for them to translate their goals into reality. Although this goal may seem straightforward enough to be easily attained *without* the benefit of the support group experience, many flagrant and subtle pressure on students in non-traditional programs make the presence of an active support group a necessity for their survival.

While numerous laws now mandate certain positive employment practices and prohibit other negative ones, the actual fulfillment of the law is as yet a slow process. Since the main goal of the support group is to equip students to deal with the many and varied challenges which affect them in their career choice, a number of very specific objectives are a necessary prerequisite to achievement of this goal. The objectives themselves are many and involved, and thus necessitates exercises (Booklet 2) to facilitate their attainment. Specific objectives may be enumerated as follows:

1) To introduce the concept of a support group to students.
2) To train students to counsel one another by sharing ideas on how to cope with various non-traditional situations.
3) To expand students' knowledge of career awareness and the employment opportunities and salary benefits of working in non-traditional jobs.
4) To equip students with basic leadership qualities for use in the outside world.
5) To help students understand the nature of sex bias, sex stereotyping, and sexism — where the concepts originated and why they have been perpetuated.

6) To familiarize students with laws addressing sex discrimination and equal educational and employment opportunities.

7) To assist students to understand sexual harassment and the actions which may be taken to eliminate it.

8) To show students how to file a grievance using accepted grievance procedures under the law.

9) To acquaint students with affirmative action in the areas of law and employment opportunities.

10) To develop students' network of contacts in relation to employment possibilities in companies which seek and support employees in non-traditional occupations.

11) To demonstrate to students both the need for and means of developing assertive behavior techniques for use in personal and professional life.

12) To facilitate students meeting, as a group, with individuals who hold non-traditional jobs and therefore may act as role models for the students.

13) To motivate students to develop themselves into role models for junior high school students, underclassmen in their own school, and any other students who may be interested in non-traditional occupations.

Benefits of a Peer Support Group

For Students —

- Opportunities to prove the effectiveness of student participation, thus building groundwork for *full* student participation in student governance.
- Increased opportunities for first-hand learning experiences through service in school.
- Increased insight into self and peers through peer counseling relationships.
- Opportunity to seek help from peers rather than adults.
- Acquisition of skills to solve own problems.

• Opportunities to develop closer relationships with counselors and administrators.

For Teachers and Administrators —

• Students' satisfaction with counseling services.

• Counselor satisfaction with counseling services.

• Ongoing constructive feedback from students.

• Increased resources of students in addressing school problems.

• Compliance with affirmative action laws.*

New problems that may arise —

• Need for an ongoing supervison and training program.

• Opposition to advocacy role of students.

• Preservation of confidentiality of students within the group.

• Reality of extra time and work for all concerned.

• Parental sanctions and misunderstanding of students' activities.

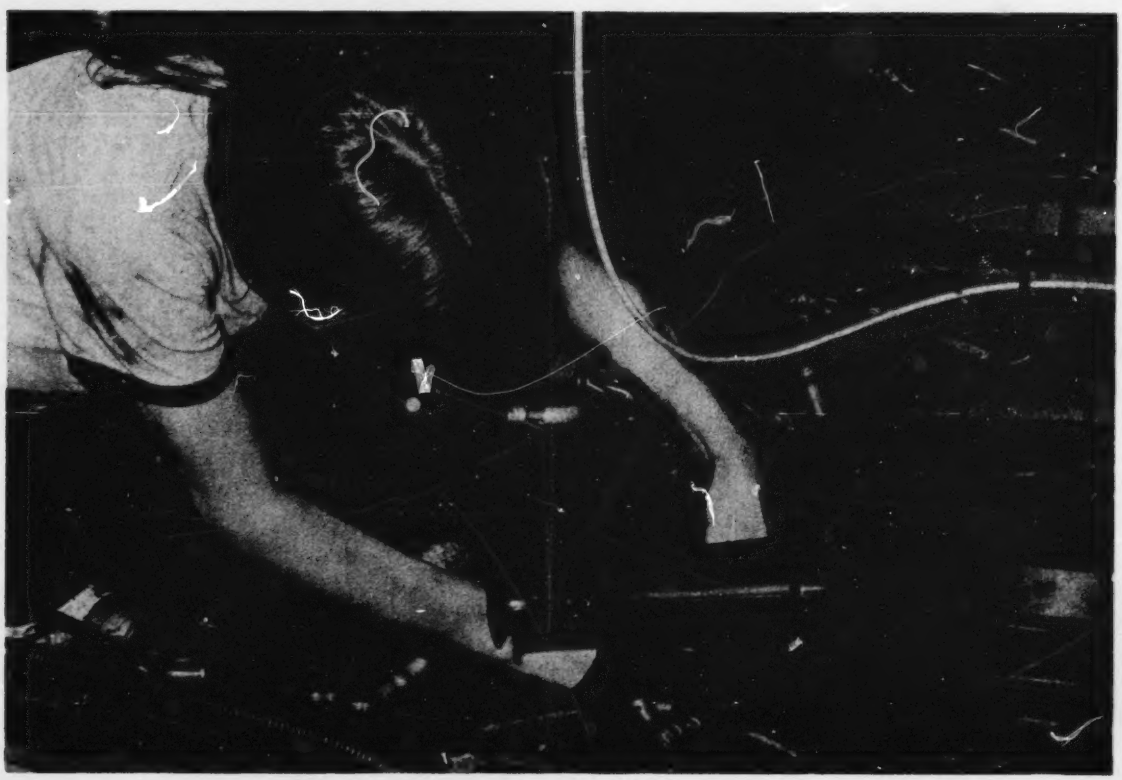
• Academic penalties (for missing classes).

• Community objections to students "counseling" other students.

• Scheduling difficulties for teachers and students.

• Time problems in terms of student assistance in the coordination of group activities.

* A list of active efforts appears in a later chapter.



Strategies for Facilitation

The successful establishment of a support group within a school setting should not be a difficult process, but it is one that does involve a number of steps to insure success.

Since the functioning of a support group cuts across all phases of the school operation — academic as well as vocational — it is important (and crucial) to have the permission and blessing of the superintendent; this is why it is best to start at the top when establishing the group.

Initially, a facilitator arranges a meeting with the superintendent-director of the school in order to discuss the establishment of a support group and enlist the superintendent's approval. The following points should be covered in such a discussion:

- the need for the group (number of students already majoring in non-traditional shops).

b. the purpose of the group — what will be done at the meetings, what goals will the group set?

c. the meeting schedule and the fact that meetings should be scheduled in such a way that no member of the group will miss the same academic class more than twice a school year or will miss shop more that the equivalent of one class period a month. (In "week about" schools, each meeting can be scheduled for a different period of the established day to accomplish the same end.)

d. the student "working" population; so many students are involved in after school jobs and sports that it is not practical to hold group meetings after school.

e. group value; the advice and support members will receive at group meetings will be of as much value to them in their chosen trades as their academic and shop training.

f. request for informational memorandum; the facilitator requests that the superintendent send a memorandum to all faculty members explaining both the importance of the school's efforts to comply with Title IX regulations and the need for active supportive services to facilitate such compliance. Administrative support in enlisting teacher assistance is extremely important, especially for support group scheduling success.

It should be understood that these same issues will be discussed by the group members during the initial meetings, and that the group's input into these matters will be given every consideration.

The second step in the facilitation of a support group involves facilitator communication with school personnel, especially teaching staff. It is the facilitator's responsibility, once the support group is operative, to disseminate to the staff information pertaining to who comprises the group and what its purpose and meeting schedule are. Also included in the information sheet or letter* should be an explanation of the procedure to be used when student members leave class to attend meetings (will they be given passes? etc.). It is to be understood that students are responsible for making up any work missed due to attendance of a support group meeting; however, they should in no way be penalized by teachers for time spent at legitimate group meetings.

Another means of reaching staff with pertinent support group information is for the facilitator to arrange the inclusion of a discussion of the support group on the agenda of a staff meeting. If the superintendent can be convinced to give his/her verbal support of the group at the meeting, then the facilitator has created the perfect opportunity for him/herself to present information about group purpose, operation, and scheduling. Afterwards, he/she should open up the floor to questions by interested parties.

Once administration and staff have sanctioned the support group, the facilitator must move toward developing group membership. This can be done using the following procedures:

a. Indentify and compile a list of students who are majoring in non-traditional shops.

b. Contact prospective group members personally, if possible, to invite them to become members of the group. Explain to them group purpose and operation. If the number of prospective members is so large that personal contact is not feasible, send a letter to each prospective member at his/her home.* Include a tear-off form at the bottom of the letter and ask to have it returned to you if the student wishes to join the group. (It is usually a good idea to give students the option of attending a meeting or two before they have to decide whether or not they want to join the group.) Be sure to contact personally any students who do not respond to the letter.

* A sample memo appears in Appendix No. 3.

* A sample letter appears in Appendix No. 4.

Enlist the aid of a few "veteran" support group members (if there are any) and use their time, interest, and abilities to help plan the first group meeting. It is also extremely effective to have these veteran peers make some initial contact with prospective members; efforts made by students for students often result in a high degree of commitment that only students can demand of one another.

Plan a very strong first meeting of the group; have veteran peers and/or have one or more students who are members of a support group in another school attend and explain what support groups are and how they work. Then, at any early meeting of the group, either verbally or by use of a questionnaire, determine from the members of the group what types of activities they would like to do at the meetings. At the end of the year, hand out an evaluation form for each support group member to fill out.*

* A sample evaluation form appears in Appendix No. 5.

The Facilitator's Role

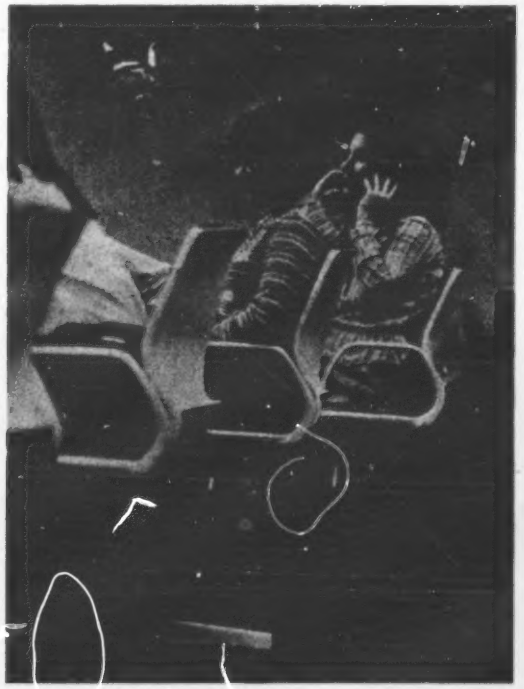
Who Is The Facilitator?

The support facilitator is an adult, preferably a guidance counselor (or any interested and qualified member of the teaching staff), who expresses the desire to undertake the work and who has some experience in functioning as a group leader.

What Is His/Her Role?

The facilitator's rapport with the students is crucial to the success of the project. He/she is primarily responsible for establishing a relaxed, open atmosphere from the outset. During the first few meetings, the facilitator role will be to ask leading questions, to guide discussions (when necessary), and to occasionally offer advice. The role of the facilitator is *not* to act as a "go-between" for the student-teacher or student-parent relationship, but rather to facilitate students' learning to deal with personal communication problems by means of discussion and related activities.

There are several specific aspects of the group counseling process that need to be examined and acted upon if the student support group is to be successful. It is most important that the first few meetings establish a relaxed, trusting atmosphere, one in which students feel free to express themselves, their experiences, goals, and problems. The facilitator's and peer counselors' rapport with new support



group members helps set this tone; then, throughout the sharing process, feedback and advice is given by the group members to one another.

The First Few Meetings

The first few group meetings are always the hardest to conduct in that the group has yet to achieve a real sense of mutual trust. Members may not know one another and so feel inhibited about speaking out on or asking questions about the issues. At this point, the facilitator works to develop (amongst the group members) open and comfortable exchanges. These can be achieved in several simple steps — he/she asks students (1) to introduce themselves to the group, (2) describe why they chose the shop they did, and (3) assess how well they are functioning in their current program. Further direct questions such as — How long have you been in your shop? and What do you find to be the most difficult aspect of being in your shop?* — also contribute to the "ice-breaking" process. Lastly, a discussion of both what is meant by the term "non-traditional" and how students feel about their participation in non-traditional shops should leave group members secure in the knowledge that they have found an adequate forum for airing their problems and successes.

If and when the group "takes off" and group members learn to coordinate meetings themselves (peer counseling thus becoming the primary mode of operation), the facilitator moves into the background. Students themselves then assume the responsibility for discussions and brainstorming strategy sessions, a procedure which helps them find solutions to problems with parents, peers, teachers or whomever.

* A list of questions appears in Appendix No. 6.

Leadership

A second stage in the growth of group process involves the establishment of group leadership roles and the determination of the authority and decision-making power of its members. The leadership role within the group need not be confined to an individual member; it may be delegated *essentially* to one person, but some of the attendant responsibilities may be shared by other group members. Leadership comes either from the counselor-facilitator or the peer counselors, and it often involves the performance of duties that need to be provided by more than one person.

A leader keeps the group together and the discussion focussed. Usually, the facilitator will assume this role, particularly in the first four to five meetings. However, allowing the students to assume the responsibility of

leadership on a rotating basis permits them to learn basic skills needed for successful management.

Students in the group feel a sense of accomplishment and confidence by making contributions to other members and the overall functioning of the group.

The leader is not a teacher or a therapist or advice-giver, but more of a time-keeper or energy-director.

The leader —

- Starts the meeting: "It's 9:00 — let's get started."
- Directs the format: "Ok, this is what we're going to do at this time."
- Makes sure that the group stays with its format: "Will you please hold off on that until she is finished?"
- Decides whether the format should be changed: "Should we continue, or stop and discuss this further?"
- Tries to involve other members: "How do you feel about that, Judy?"
- Summarizes at the conclusion of the meeting: "Let's see what we've accomplished. . . ."

In general, the group leader and members must be careful to encourage healthy participation in group process by their behaving in such a way as to demostrate to their peers constructive and respectful conduct. The leader especially should never project a low expectation of student behavior, but rather should require a high level of individual and group achievement.

No matter who assumes the leadership role, that individual must project a quality of "presence" which effectively builds members' confidence in that person's ability to perform the duties of the office. This "presence" is sometimes an offshoot of his/her maintenance of clear communication amongst group factions during decision-making.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at support group meetings should always be voluntary. Students should never feel under pressure to come. However, it is good to make sure that the reason a student is not coming is because he/she is not interested, rather than because the student does not know anything about the group, is uninformed about its purpose, does not feel welcome, or is too shy to attend.

Strategies For Taking Attendance

Always take attendance at support group meetings and keep track of it on a master sheet. Once in a while a teacher will give a student a cut for attending, and this can be straightened out easily if you have a record of attendance.

If a teacher gives a cut, schedules a test, field trip or other special event at the time the support group meets, always speak to the teacher about it; give him/her a copy of the original memo listing all the meeting dates and times and remind the teacher of the priority which the superintendent has placed on the meetings of the group. If problems with a particular teacher persist, take the matter to the supertendent. If problems occur with a number of teachers, ask the superintendent to write a memo to the entire staff, setting down the priority which the meetings of the group should have in relation to the scheduling of class activities. It is also helpful to remind teachers that the support group meetings will only take a particular student out of an academic class twice (or less) per school year and out of shop only 45 minutes per week.

Passes or reminders handed out in homerooms on the morning of each day the group meets are the most effective way of notifying members about meetings, because students do not always remember when and where a meeting is scheduled.

Scheduling Meetings

Support group meetings should be held on a "reasonable" calendar basis. Monthly meetings are usually too far apart to establish the rapport necessary for the group to truly serve its intended purpose and maintain a sense of continuity. Weekly or biweekly meetings are more suitable to successful group func-

tioning. However, in many schools the absence of free periods and the existence of numerous lunches makes scheduling a major problem. Because students will often have to miss an academic or shop class each time they attend a support group meeting, it is advisable to rotate group sessions to different periods of the day and different days of the week so that students will not miss the same class more than three times in a school year.

Spending Time Wisely

In addition to meeting schedules, an important element in making the group a viable one is the way in which time during the meeting is spent. For group members to really be able to share their experience and problems as students in non-traditional programs and receive helpful feedback and support from other group members, the first few support group meetings should not be open to anyone other than the group facilitator and the non-traditional students themselves. This closure will allow the group to more easily and clearly focus on initial objectives, and it will also help foster a relaxed, informal setting where students feel comfortable talking about their concerns.

Activities

The group process itself goes through several stages, including group definition and growth and development. The working out of its goals and objectives, rules and procedures, and general meeting format can be covered during the first couple of meetings. As weekly or biweekly sessions follow, variety in format depends upon the goals and activities of that week. Some meetings will be highly-structured and others more loosely structured to allow for flexibility of content.

Structured Meetings

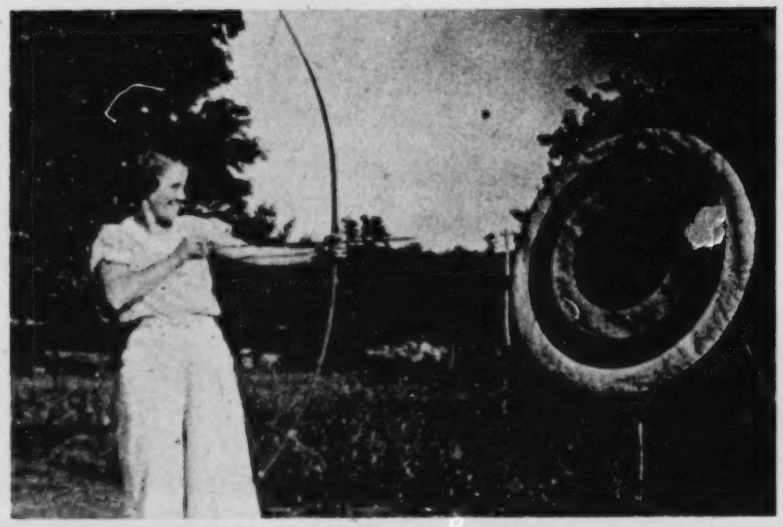
There are many different types of structured activities which can act as a valuable means of stimulating group interaction. Consciousness-raising, assertiveness training and values clarification are just a few of the most basic of such activities. Likewise, group discussion of any films, videotapes, slide presentations, or publications which deal with the coping mechanisms of people in non-traditional careers is of immeasurable benefit to members' understanding of their position in the world of work.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers also provide an interesting source of information and entertainment in group meetings. Those the support group might consider asking to speak are (1) employers/companies who hire non-traditional help, (2) supportive co-workers of non-traditional students, and (3) personnel of the State Department of Education and Office of Sex Equity.

"Outreach" Activities

An alternative to bringing speakers into the school to address the support group is for the group members themselves to visit local junior high



schools during the district's annual vocational school admission presentation. This form of visitation heightens the non-traditional career awareness of younger students at a most crucial point in their decision-making; it also encourages sex-fair thinking at the time of their application to the vocational high school, a time in which those shop exploratory choices made actually determine the shops a student will be scheduled for during his/her freshman year. A further significant activity involves group members meeting with all the ninth graders who have explored non-traditional shops during that year and who must then declare a permanent shop choice. Acting as role models of successful non-traditional students, support group members encourage hesitant ninth graders to carefully consider all options available before making a final shop choice.

Through these various structured activities, the support group moves toward attainment of its goals. Group members gain a renewed sense of what they expect to receive from their membership and also what the group expects to receive from its activities. Members benefit from a rethinking of these goals from time to time in order that group purpose remain clearly defined and focussed.

Note: For a *better list* of activities, refer to Book No. 2 of the Project SCOPE series, *A Fair Shot! An Equal Chance.*

FUNDING

It is interesting to note that the support group and its related activities should require no additional or outside funding. The school provides the personnel and the facilities, and the students provide the initiative and enthusiasm needed for the success of the project. However, if a source of funding is needed for projects such as a videotape, a booklet, or some other program the group feels it can coordinate, a few sources of funding are available.

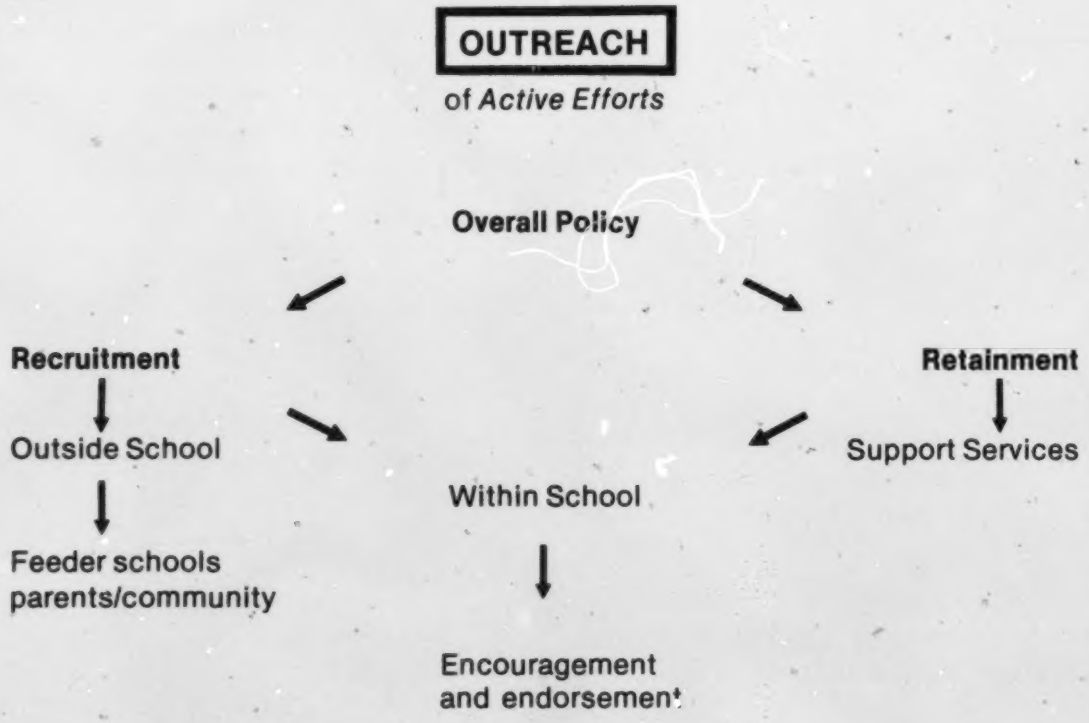
It is not expecting too much of high school students to become involved in grants or similarly lengthy activities. At Shawsheen, many projects have been and are currently being undertaken — some of year-long duration, others for a 2 or 3 month period. The support group, when delineating its goals and objectives, sets priorities for itself and determines if it wishes to pursue short-term or long-term activities, or both.

Students who are support group members are indeed likely candidates for involvement in and implementation of sophisticated projects. Because so few students still select non-traditional careers, those who do are strong decision-makers who withstand opposition well.

ACTIVE EFFORTS

Active efforts are the activities a school undertakes to encourage enrollment of previously under-represented groups of students and to serve those students once they are enrolled. State and federal laws not only prohibit public schools from discriminating against students on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, or handicap, but also require schools to take certain steps to serve previously under-represented groups of students.

Federal statutes and regulations under Title IX of the Education Ammendments of 1972 are closely linked with comparable laws which also deal with discrimination on the basis of sex. Under these regulations, public vocational schools are required to conduct a self-evaluation of programs and policies affecting access by female and male students. Since the State Department of Education is responsible for verifying that applicants for and recipients of federal funds are in compliance with Title IX before awarding federal funds, it studies the Annual Admissions Updates of selective secondary vocational schools for conformity with the law.



Overall Policy

- Look at curriculum materials, tests, bulletin boards, and textbooks that are used in your school. Develop a policy for selecting any new materials free from sex stereotyping.
- Actively recruit female shop teachers for trade and technical programs.
- Provide in-service or seminars for teachers and counselors to assure non-stereotyped and non-biased counseling and support services for students.
- Work with teachers (through in-service) and students (through classroom presentations) on peer acceptance of non-traditional female and male students.
- Make sure that pamphlets, student handbooks, and course titles do not contain language suggesting a course is designed only for one sex.
- Establish a counseling program with elements designed to address the problems unique to the non-traditional student, problems related to school, study, and career planning and placement.
- Be sure to include any support services and successful programs (particularly the student support group) in your active efforts list when submitting your Annual Admissions Policy. Update it with the State Department of Education.
- Work with employers to place students in non-traditional jobs in cooperative work experience programs.

  To strengthen job procedures:

  1. Inform all cooperating agencies and employers that it is illegal for public schools to cooperate with any employer who discriminates.

  2. Be prepared to personally endorse your non-traditional students, and provide follow-up activities in order to help with any difficulties they may encounter on the job.

- For recruitment purposes, compile a publication about the major employers of the vocational schools' graduates and include such information as salaries, fringe benefits, job opportunities, and names of former students employed in non-traditional fields.

Feeder Schools

Feeder schools are those schools which "feed" your vocational school its applicants. Encourage your feeder schools to promote and support your vocational school as much as possible.

- Encourage feeder schools to publicize non-traditional opportunities through:
  - bulletin board displays showing young women and men doing non-traditional work; include information on the vocational school.
  - assemblies on non-traditional course offerings at the vocational high school which explain the advantages and disadvantages of those fields.
  - brochures on current labor statistics and job opportunities for the eighties.
  - classroom presentations on choosing a vocational occupation.
- Prepare an "admission packet hand-

book" for use by Junior High School counselors to include information such as:

- your vocational school's admission policy.
- application and directions for admission.
- prerequisites for admission.
- course offerings.

- Produce a slide/tape, videotape, or other media presentation about the vocational school and its programs for use in the feeder schools. Have students in non-traditional shops accompany the audio-visual presentation to the junior high schools to speak with the students in small groups about their work in shop.
- Keep the feeder school counselors informed and updated about your school's student support group. Offer these students' services to the schools to counsel any prospective non-traditional students.
- Send information to accepted junior high school applicants concerning non-traditional programs: what they are and what they offer, job opportunities for the 80's, and information on the support group and other services offered to them.
- Ideas for Parent's Night/Career Day Programs:
  - presentation on career options.
  - panel discussion of students in non-traditional programs.
  - films showing students at work in non-traditional fields.
  - guest speakers from non-traditional fields.
  - current and future opportunities and earnings in the labor market.
  - reasons to consider non-traditional fields.

Parents and Commmunity

Develop an intensive public relations campaign which uses local/relevant town newspapers, radio, and T.V. stations to create:

- ongoing articles stressing non-traditional opportunities and the benefits of such occupations.
- interviews with such people as the superintendent-director, a leading local employer, a non-traditional employee, a shop instructor, a job placement director, etc., encouraging non-traditional training.
- news releases for Parents' Night/Career Day Programs, new courses offered, updated labor statistics, Open Houses, support group activities, successful active efforts, etc.
- "success stories" of students in non-traditional programs.
- If your school system sends a newsletter to parents, submit stories about course offerings and students enrolled in non-traditional programs.
- Place posters, articles and brochures on non-traditional vocational education in public libraries, public information centers, high school newspapers, etc.

NOTE: Most of this information can be obtained from the Computer-based Occupational Information System in your own school.

Within School

- Prepare bulletin board displays in shops and halls featuring:
  - pictures of vocational students doing non-traditional shop work.
  - information on laws guaranteeing equal education and employment opportunities.
  - information on the student support group: its members, meeting times, and the facilitator's name.
  - labor statistics of occupations which are non-traditional.
- Design an inexpensive brochure (written by students) featuring males and females in non-traditional fields. Indicate the advantages and disadvantages of each trade (i.e., salaries, advancement opportunities, working conditions, etc.). Be sure to include "success stories" about former students who have entered non-traditional fields.
- Utilize the library, resource center, or Career Information Center at the school to disseminate and display non-traditional career materials and non-sexist information.

Support Services

The following can be combined with a support group to better its services, or they can serve as an alternative to a peer support group:

- Give individual/group counseling to those freshmen expressing interest in non-traditional programs.
- Assign "support buddies" — other non-traditional students that meet on their own time to support and encourage one another — to freshman passing through non-traditional shops.
- Place posters/bulletins on walls throughout each non-traditional shop; these should publicize the support group and give the name of the facilitator so that students may go to him/her for assistance. An excellent example of such a poster can be found in the appendix of Project SCOPE, Book No. 2.
- Hold an assembly of freshmen females expressing interest in non-traditional programs:
  - Use guest speakers from non-traditional fields.
  - Have each shop instructor speak about the advantages/disadvantages of their program and opportunities involved.
  - Cite labor statistics.
  - Talk with non-traditional students in these shops.
- Submit stories featuring non-traditional students and the support group to the local school newspaper.

APPENDIX #1

OUTLINE OF PROJECT SCOPE BOOKLETS

TOGETHER WE CAN

Together We Can addresses strategies on the formulation and coordination of a peer support group for vocational students in non-traditional programs. Together We Can provides a blueprint for an active counseling support group, one which enables non-traditional students to grow personally with self-confidence and self-awareness. Topics covered include:

* General information on Project SCOPE
* Concepts of a support group
* Understanding the need for such a group
* Goals and objectives
* Actual strategies and suggestions on facilitation

Together We Can should be used by:

* Career and guidance counselors
* Vocational administrators
* Non-traditional vocational students

A FAIR SHOT/AN EQUAL CHANCE

A Fair Shot/An Equal Chance is primarily a handbook of student activities to be used by a support group. Activities cover such areas as:

* Peer counseling
* Group cohesion
* Assertive behavior
* Group projects
* Sexual harrassment
* Sex role stereotyping
* Bias and discrimination
* Role-playing

A Fair Shot/An Equal Chance should be distributed to support group members so that the activities within it can be done at group meetings; the booklet may also be of benefit to any class or organization concerned with the issues of bias and stereotyping.

IT'S NOT FUNNY/IT'S ILLEGAL

It's Not Funny/It's Illegal summarizes those laws which guarantee equal education and employment opportunities to both students and non-students. It's Not Funny/It's Illegal is a reference booklet which should be made readily available to all high school students and vocational personnel. The booklet may be used by:

* Vocational students
* Vocational libraries
* Non-traditional student support group members
* Non-traditional employees
* Non-traditional employers

IT'S UP TO YOU/PORTRAITS

It's Up To You/Portraits is a collection of character sketches of students in non-traditional vocational programs. It's Up To You/Portraits realistically describes the nature of non-traditional students--their problems, successes, and methods of coping with their shop choices. Contents include:

* Deciding on a non-traditional program
* Labor statistics on working women and non-traditional workers
* Actual character sketches
* Parent student bibliography

APPENDIX #2

WHAT IS PEER COUNSELING?

Peer counseling is essentially a self-help program in which students are trained to counsel or advise other students. The primary value of peer counseling lies in the opportunity it provides students for working out those personal and social problems which affect the success of their educational endeavors.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PEER COUNSELING IN A SUPPORT GROUP?

Within a support group, peer counseling assists students in identifying and further developing the skills, competencies, values, preferences, and self-confidence necessary for professional success in non-traditional careers. Effective counseling is offered to/by the students in a spontaneous and informal manner; in this way, students develop the trusting and supportive relationships with other group members which are so helpful to the development of their positive self-images and decision-making skills.

WHY USE STUDENTS AS COUNSELORS?

There are several good reasons why peer counseling should be used in support group situations:

1. Students often feel that guidance counselors and school personnel do not truly understand the nature of their problems as well as other students do. Thus, while they will approach fellow students about their problems willingly, they may not feel comfortable doing so with school officials.

2. Active student participation in counseling provides students with the opportunity for input into their own educational process.

3. Peer counseling familiarizes students with the various dimensions of the teacher/advisor/learner roles, and so enables them to understand the rewards and problems involved in each.

4. Peer counseling is not a program which must be limited to scheduled activities; rather, it should have a rippling effect throughout the school and community. The skills that peer counselors refine can therefore be successfully utilized in all social situations in which these students find themselves.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PEER COUNSELOR?

Within a support group, a peer counselor provides support, information, and referral services to other students; he/she is not a "problem solver" or "psychiatrist." Furthermore, the peer counselor offers personal counseling by helping students identify and clarify their problems while strengthening their ability to cope with challenging situations.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR/ADULT COUNSELOR IN A PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM?

The primary function of the adult staff person is to recruit and train peer counselors so that an active peer counseling program may be implemented. A secondary function of that person is his/her supervision of and input into the existing program to help maximize its potential for service.

APPENDIX #3

Memo To Teachers Concerning the Support Group

To: All Teachers

From: Facilitator's Name

Date:

Subject: Support Group For Students in Non-Traditional Programs

The first meeting of the support group for students majoring in non-traditional programs will take place on_____. The schedule has been set up so that members of the group will not miss any academic class more than twice during the entire school year, and will not miss more than 45 minutes of shop per week. Because membership in the group is voluntary, you will be provided with a list of the group members before_____.

All meetings will be listed on the staff calendar and announced in the daily bulletin and morning announcements. Students are to be excused from shop only for the time period indicated on the meeting schedule. We would appreciate your cooperation in both releasing students to attend these meetings and in not scheduling special projects or exams during meeting times.

All meetings take place in the_____. On the day of each meeting, there will be an announcement in the daily bulletin and over the P.A. system during homeroom. Students do not need passes to attend the meetings. Attendance will be taken, however.

As far as we know, the following students are potential participants in the group. After our first meeting, we will give you a list of the students who have elected to join the group.

Students	Shop

APPENDIX #4

Bedford Billerica Burlington Tewksbury Wilmington

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School

100 Cook Street, Billerica, Massachusetts 01866

BENJAMIN WOLK
Superintendent-Director

PAUL F. AHERN
Assistant Director

Telephone
667-2111
935-3632
Area Code 617

Letter To Students Informing Them Of Support Group Existence

Dear_____,

I would like to invite you to join a support group for students who are majoring in non-traditional programs. In this group, you will be brought together with other students who support one another by talking about what it is like to have made a non-traditional career choice.

Every meeting will be held at varying times on different days. This is so that you won't miss any one academic class more than twice during the school year. Some of the meetings will cover the following areas:

- student discussions of actual experiences in shop
- information on what laws exist to protect you by guaranteeing equal education and employment opportunities
- information about affirmative action--what it is and where to go for legal help if you feel you are being discriminated against
- introduction to men and women who work in non-traditional occupations
- information on sexual harrassment, sex bias, and sex role stereotyping--what they are and what can be done about them

The support group plans a meeting regularly each week, and so has scheduled the first meeting for_____, at_____. Please fill out this form to let us know whether or not you would like to join the support group, and return it to me immediately at_____. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,

_____

_____

Please check one:

_____ Yes, I'd like to join the support group.

_____ No, I'm not interested.

_____ Yes, I'm interested,but cannot attend the first meeting. Please let me know of the next meeting.

Name:

Shop:

APPENDIX #5

End Of The Year Evaluation Questionnaire

We'd like your opinions so that the group can serve you better. Please think over the items listed below and write your comments. Thank you.

What's the best way for us to let you know when and where the meetings take place?

_____ Daily bulletin

_____ Passes given out to you by your homeroom teacher

_____ Other

Do you think the support group is too big? If you do, how do you suggest we split it up?

_____ By shop

_____ By grade

_____ Other

What do you think we should do at the meetings?

_____ Have speakers

_____ See films

_____ Talk over problems/do peer counseling

_____ Other

What were the things we did this year that you liked the best?

What were the things we did this year that you liked the least?

Can you suggest any ways in which we can get the rest of the students majoring in non-traditional shops to come to the support group?

Do you have any other comments concerning the group?

APPENDIX #6

QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

1. What made you choose your shop?

2. Had/has anyone influenced your decision to pick your shop?

3. How do your parents feel about your choice of a non-traditional shop?

4. How do your friends feel about your choice?

5. How does your teacher feel about your being in the shop?

6. Do you like your shop? Why/why not?

7. How do your co-workers treat you?

8. Do you feel you are being treated fairly in your shop?

9. From whom do you receive support?

10. What are the advantages/disadvantages of being in your shop?

Bibliography

Women On the Move: A Counseling Workshop Manual For Women Seeking Non-Traditional Work by Priscilla Hope Farmer, Ed. D.

Contains information and exercises for participants in training programs exploring new career options.

Available from: Pennsylvania Educational Information Centers
Pennsylvania Department of Education
P.O. Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17126
Attn. — Ms. Virginia F. Barcus, PaEIC Project Coordinator

Women, Work, and Vocational Education by Corine H. Rieder

Available from: The Center for Vocational Education
Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210

A Resource For Developing A Plan To Increase The Enrollment Of Female Students In Non-Traditional Shops To Public Vocational Technical High Schools by Polita C. Gordon

Available from: The Division of Occupational Education
Massachusetts Department of Education
31 St. James Avenue
Boston, MA 02116

Recruiting Women For Non-Traditional Vocational Education by Janice Brandstrom

Available from: Lane Community College
Eugene, OR

Choices and Challenges: A Student Guidebook About Non-Traditional Career Opportunities by Carvell Education Management Planning, Inc.

Available from: Western Curriculum Coordination Center
University of Hawaii
College of Education, West Hall 216
1176 University Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96822

Try It, You'll Like It! A Student's Introduction to Non-Sexist Vocational Education by Martha Matthews and Shirley McCune

Available from: The Resource Center on Sex Roles in Education
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education
Washington, D.C

Everyone's Guide to Peer Counseling Resources for Schools, No. 23 by Sylvester DiDiago

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31 St. James Avenue
Boston, MA 02116

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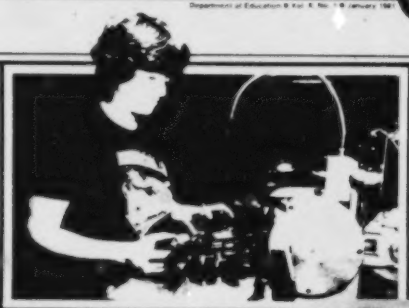
THE COMMON WEALTH



STUDENT SUPPORT GROU

COPING WITH SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

The only girl in machine shop and the only boy in sewing class sometimes need support - a special kind of support currently being offered at the Shawsheen Valley Regional Technical School in Billerica. Students who choose to enter occupational areas which have traditionally been considered strictly male or female often encounter a great deal of pressure and harassment, said John McDermott, guidance counselor at the Shawsheen school.

A support group offers the kind of emotional back-up these students need to cope with their present problems and with those that they may experience later as the only woman on a construction crew or the only man in a secretarial pool.

A support group by definition is a group in which students, through the training and assistance of a facilitator (usually a guidance counselor), learn to support and advise one another. The group at Shawsheen meets once a week allowing students to exchange ideas and discuss the coping strategies that have worked for them. Since the first group was initiated three years ago, the drop-out rate of students from nontraditional shops has fallen substantially and the number of new students entering these areas has more than tripled.

Students and counselors at Shawsheen have begun to assist other vocational schools in establishing their own support

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Shawsheen students break stereotypes in career search

BILLERICA — Vocational students in an occupational attitude survey conducted by the state Department of Education in 1978, indicated a preference for working with girls enrolled in courses from closed to carpentry.

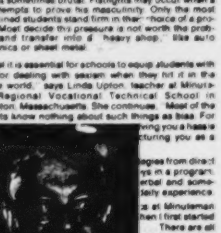
There is still a feeling of non-acceptance, not from the teachers but from students, admits Janice Porter, a

ree gain entrance to middle and high-level management positions.

The result is a rapidly growing demand for women to industry and business in non-traditional roles. Most are also breaking out into jobs previously held by women.

Donna Fitzgerald is a sophomore enrolled in the drafting shop at Shawsheen Tech and one example of how women are moving into career areas previously closed to them. "I'm in the program because I like working with closed engines and because I like it. I'm good at it," said the teenager clad in grease-stained overalls.

Susan Riley and Susan



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